

Parental Involvement with Homework Improves Literacy Test Scores

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Introduction

Reading test scores are at an all-time low in New York City public schools. According to New York City Chancellor of education, Carmen Farina one of the ways to improve test scores is to get parents involved in their children's academic performance, specifically parental involvement with homework. Many studies have demonstrated that family involvement encourages student achievement and/or other positive behaviors that increase success in school. Our goal as pedagogues is to find effective strategies that will improve and increase the relationship between the parental role and the child's success in school. By exchanging information, sharing in the decision making process, and collaborating in children's learning, parents can become partners in the educational process (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2001; Valle et al. 2016; Aries & Cabus, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a correlation between parental involvement with homework help and reading test scores of twenty 3rd graders from intact households at P.S. X in Brooklyn, NY.

Review of Related Literature

Pros

Parent involvement is an essential component to a student's education. In New York the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; 2002) mandate parental involvement in education and family-school relations across elementary and secondary school levels (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Many researchers believe that when parents are involved in their child's learning process they do better in school. Family involvement in education can lead to increased student achievement, motivation, and self-esteem while having a positive impact on behavior and academics (Wiseman, 2009). Parent involvement behaviors include volunteering at school, communicating with the teacher, attending school functions and assisting with homework (Hughes & Kwok, 2007). According to Valle et al. (2016) effective homework time management affects positively the amount of homework done, and, consequently, academic achievement. This is stronger for elementary school aged children (Gonida & Cortina, 2004). The belief that all parents should actively participate in their children's education has been supported by decades of research connecting parental with higher academic achievement (Sheldon, 2003).

It is important to know that when children come from an intact household parental involvement is increased and tend to have more resources and time to provide homework help. Parents of children that come from non-intact families may have time and economic constraints which may cause them to have less involvement in their child's learning process (Sheldon, 2003; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hara & Burke, 1998).

It is often said that a child's first teacher are their parents and the learning process begins at home. Parents are models for their children and they strive to emulate their parents. According,

to theorist Holdaway (1979) he believed that learning to read was a natural development that is closely linked to a child's natural development of oral language skills. By promoting a relationship between family literacy, student improvement, and parental participation reading test scores increase (Mkandawire, 2015; Paratore, 2005; Gutman & McLoyd, 2000; Wiseman, 2009). As we review literature on the extensive research on parental involvement with homework (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001) believes that parents involve themselves with their child's homework for three reasons. (1) Parental role-construction: reflects parents' expectations and beliefs about what they should do in relation to schooling. Roles are constructed from parents' values, beliefs, goals, and expectation. (2) Parents Sense of Efficacy: parents appear to become involved in their children's homework because they believe their activities will make a positive difference for the child. (3) Parents' Perception of Invitations to Involvement: parents become involved because they perceive invitations from their child's teacher suggesting that their homework involvement is expected and wanted. The power of invitations in eliciting involvement increases academic achievement in students (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001; Ediger, 2008).

In "Linking Parent Involvement With Student Achievement: Do Race and Income Matter? Desimone (2001) states that previous studies have shown that parent-involvement patterns vary according to parental social, racial-ethnic and economic characteristics. It's been reported that children from two parent household are more involved in school activities regardless of race or ethnic background. However, low-income families; parents have less time and flexibility to meet involvement expectations (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Burrow, Drummond & Stipek).

Cons

Although, there are many advantages to having parental involvement with homework in schools not all researchers agree with one another. There are studies that found that frequent direct parental involvement was related to lower standardized test scores and grades. One possible reason is that parental involvement decreases children's intrinsic motivation whereas autonomy granting increases intrinsic motivation (Silinkas, Niemi, Lerkkanen, & Nurmi, 2013). Findings also suggest parents often feel ill prepared, by limitations in knowledge and competing demands for their time and energy (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Burow, 1995). This indicates that some parents feel like their role should be differentiated from that of the teacher. Families from low-income and/or non-intact families are more likely to be at a disadvantage when it comes involvement in learning and many times are not asked how the partnership between home and school can be strengthened, thus, feeling confused on how best to assist their children with homework (Kay, Fitzgerald, Paradee, & Mellencamp, 1994).

Current Strategies

There are a number of strategies and approaches that schools are taking to connect families to be part of their child's learning process.

1. **Student Led Conferences:** A new approach where students leads parent/teacher conference. The student is required to share their work and reflect on what they have learned with their family. This helps to bridge the divide between the school and the home and also enables parents to understand their child's progress more deeply.
2. **Parents as Reading Partners (PARP):** This is an initiative to get parents to read to their children and vice versa. It is a voluntary effort of the school which includes parents,

students, administrators, teachers and staff in a collaborative partnership whose focus is on reading.

3. Dial-A-Teacher: Hotline that was created by the United Federation of teacher to help student and parents with homework. The help line is for elementary and middle school students, run by classroom teachers. They offer services in several languages such as; Bengali, Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese and Fukanese), English, French, Haitian-Creole, Russian, Slovak and Spanish.

Statement of Hypothesis

HR1:

Parental Involvement with homework to 20 third grade students from tow parent household, five times a week for 30 minutes a day over a two month period at home in the evening; will increase reading test scores of P.S. X on practice New York State English Language Arts Exam.

Method

Participants

The participants of the study are 20 third grade students. Eleven of the students are African-American and nine are Latino Americans. The students are from intact households.

Instruments

The instruments utilized for this study included questionnaires for the students and parents. In addition to questionnaires, the students reading test scores will be measured by one pre-test and one post-test of the practice New York State English Language Arts examination. The students will be given a practice exam at the implementation of the study and another 8 weeks at the conclusion of the study.

Experimental Design**Procedure****Results****Discussion****Implication**

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Appendix A: Principal Consent Form

Dear Principal,

Thank you for allowing me to be part of your enriching school community. As you are aware I am presently completing my graduate degree at City of University of New York at Brooklyn College. This semester I will have to conduct an action research project in a third grade classroom of 28 students. My research will focus on how parental involvement with homework help students improve literary test scores. This research will require that I select and monitor students, as well as acquiring parental permission to help gather information. In addition, parents will also be given a consent form and be required to fill out a questionnaire and a post survey. To respect every ones privacy, names of the participants will not be used (All names will remain anonymous).

This study will help me to better understand and to bridge the gap between parental involvement with homework and the learning process for students to succeed in achieving academically. I am asking for your consent to administer this action research in your school. Thank you for your cooperation and support.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me @lisaduvalsaint@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Ms. Lisa Duvalsaint

Appendix B: Parental Consent Form

Dear Parents/Guardians,

My name is Lisa Duvalsaint and I am currently in the stages of completing my graduate program at the City University of New York at Brooklyn College in Childhood Education. This semester I will be conducting an Action Research Project. The purpose of this research project is to examine whether parental involvement with homework help at increases literacy test scores. This study will help me to better understand and to bridge the gap between parental involvement with homework and the learning process for students to succeed in achieving academically.

I am asking for your permission to have your child be part of this important research. This will take place in a span of 8 weeks. You and Your child's name will remain anonymous. If you choose to have your child participate in this research, they will given surveys and questionnaires to fill out within the course of the eight weeks. Your Child will also be required to fill out a homework log every week to help support this research.

Throughout this study I hope to better understand and to bridge the gap between parental involvement with homework and the learning process for students to succeed in achieving academically specifically in literacy. If you have any concerns or questions, Please feel free to contact me at lisaduvalsaint@gmail.com. Thank You in advance for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Ms. Lisa Duvalsaint

Yes, I _____ will consent to have my child _____
participate in Action Research Project.

No, I _____ do not consent to have my child _____
participate in Action Research Project.

Appendix C: Parent Questionnaire

Directions: Please select one of the numbers below that best answers the question and place your response on the space provided to the right.

1=Strongly Agree 2=Agree 3=Disagree 4=Strongly Disagree

- I help my child with homework every night. _____
- I have a set time for homework every night. _____
- I do homework with my child at least 3x a week. _____
- My child does well in school because of my help. _____
- I am a member of the Parent Teacher Association. _____
- Do you have difficulty with your child's homework? _____
- I assist with my child's homework only when asked. _____
- I have a good relationship with my child's teacher. _____
- I like helping my child with homework. _____
- I do not like helping my child with homework. _____
- I always attend school functions at my child's school. _____

- [illegible]